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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5764
INFO RUEHXK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY 0045
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RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 0596
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RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 LISBON 000966

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/10/2017

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SUBJECT: SPEAKER PELOSI'S APRIL 6 MEETING WITH PARLIAMENT
PRESIDENT JAIME GAMA

Classified By: Deputy Pol/Econ Counselor Cari Enav for reasons 1.4 (b)
and (d)

Summary

¶1. (C) Speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi paid a courtesy call on Portuguese Parliament President Jaime Gama on April 6 during a Lisbon stopover following her trip to the Middle East. The hour-long meeting was cordial and broad ranging. Speaker Pelosi underscored that the delegation had traveled to the Middle East on a fact-finding mission and to speak with regional key players, per the Baker-Hamilton Study Group recommendations. Discussions centered on Syria's role in regional stability, greater EU troop contributions in Afghanistan, the way forward in Iraq, relations with Lebanon, and the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, with particular reference to the Saudi peace proposal.

Meeting Participants:

¶2. (SBU) Speaker Pelosi and several representatives underscored to Gama and the press that the bipartisan delegation was religiously and ethnically diverse.

Portuguese Attendees:

Parliament President Jaime Gama
Maria Madalena Fischer, Diplomatic Advisor to Parliament
President

U.S. Attendees:

Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi(D-CA)
Representative Tom Lantos (D-CA)
Representative Nick Rahall (D-WV)
Representative David Hobson (R-OH)
Representative Lousie Slaughter (D-NY)
Representative Keith Ellison (D-MN)
Wilson Livingood, House Sergeant in Arms
Paul Pelosi (Speaker's spouse)
Charge d'Affaires Adrienne O'Neal, U.S. Embassy Lisbon
Dep P/E Counselor Cari Enav, U.S. Embassy Lisbon (notetaker)

Syria

¶3. (C) Speaker Pelosi outlined for Gama the strong, unified message that the delegation delivered to Syrian President

Bahsir el-Assad. All members expressed serious concern about Syria being used as an entry platform for fighters into Iraq, underscored the importance of Syria allowing the Hariri tribunal to proceed, urged Assad to stop the country's support of Hamas and Hezbollah, asked for his help in freeing the Israeli soldiers captured by Hezbollah, and reviewed the detention of individual dissidents and opposition leaders.

14. (C) Pelosi noted that the delegation had gone to ascertain if Assad was a serious interlocutor. Despite discussion with key Syrian officials, Assad's intentions in the region were still unclear. She agreed with Gama that Assad had squandered the opportunity to implement reform when he first assumed the Presidency and noted that despite difficult bilateral relations, the Syrian people had warmly welcomed the delegation.

Afghanistan: The EU Needs to Carry its Own Weight

15. (C) Speaker Pelosi shared that a senior U.S. military officer told her during a recent trip to Afghanistan that it was imperative to win the war by 2008 or face the possibility of losing the peace. Representatives Lantos and Hobson expressed concern that certain European countries, specifically France and Germany, were unwilling to deploy forces without caveats, particularly in southern Afghanistan.

(Note: Portugal currently has 145 infantry troops and 7 air controllers deployed to Afghanistan under ISAF, serving in Karbala, Afghanistan without caveat.) Lantos added that although "the U.S. had provided hundreds of thousands of troops over two generations to defend Europe during the Cold War, it now had to beg for a few thousand European troops" to fight in Afghanistan. Pelosi, Lantos and Hobson underscored the need for the European Union "to step up to the plate" and

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urged Portugal to use its upcoming position as EU President in the latter half of 2007 to encourage the EU to "carry its own weight" in stabilizing the country.

16. (C) Gama acknowledged that Afghanistan remained problematic, both as a proving ground for enemies of the West and as a source of drugs bound for Europe. He noted Portugal's strong cooperation with the U.S. through several administrations, including the use of Lajes Air Force Base for Enduring Freedom missions and in the global war on terrorism. He underscored that Portugal remained highly supportive of NATO's mission and agreed that the West could not afford to lose the war in Afghanistan.

Iraq

17. (C) Noting that several generals have said the war in Iraq could not be won militarily, Pelosi commented that the mission there needed to be changed from one of combat to one of training. Pelosi and Gama agreed that withdrawal had to be orderly and leave behind a sound political structure. Pelosi added that she had expressed concern to President Al-Maliki during a recent visit to Baghdad over Iraq's inability to achieve the benchmarks outlined by President Bush (i.e. constitution, reconstruction, regional diplomatic efforts). Gama added that there needed to be a new international mandate in Iraq that included not just the U.S. and the EU, but China, Japan, Turkey and Russia. Although Gama commented that the U.S. was no longer the primary target of Iraqi insurgents, Pelosi countered that U.S. forces continued to suffer painful losses.

Lebanon

18. (C) After meetings with key Lebanese officials, it was unclear whether the Lebanese loved the U.S. and Siniora or if they just hated Hezbollah more, Representative Hobson commented. One thing was clear, however, all Lebanese interlocutors had underscored the need to maintain dialogue with Syria, Pelosi noted. She added that the delegation

urged Nabih Berri to call Congress into session, but that he declined due to its "illegitimacy." Parliament President Gama added that it was important to get Hezbollah out of Southern Lebanon and Syria out of Lebanon to ensure a safer Israel.

Israel/Palestinian Territories and the Saudi Peace Proposal

¶9. (C) Speaker Pelosi reported that the delegation had met with Israeli and Palestinian officials who all shared a strong desire for peace. (Note: The delegation did not meet with Hamas representatives.) Pelosi and Gama agreed that the Saudi peace proposal was a good first step. Gama noted that it was unclear how the Quartet would view it since the proposal included non-starters for the Israelis such as the right of return for refugees, and it was imperative that Israel come to the table. Lantos agreed, adding that the delegation had told the Saudis that negotiations had just begun. The plan could not be a "take it or leave it" offer.

Iran

¶10. (C) The delegation said it had expressed concern for Iran's foreign policy and its nuclear program with interlocutors in all countries, noting that Representatives Lantos and Hobson would be introducing legislation on the civil use of nuclear power when Congress resumed.

Press Reports

¶11. (U) Speaker Pelosi spoke briefly to journalists after the meeting, stressing that the delegation's Middle East trip, which had focused on the fight against terrorism and bringing peace to the region, had been "intense." She underscored that the bipartisan, religiously and ethnically diverse delegation presented a strong, unified message to its interlocutors. She noted that Portugal was a valued friend of the U.S. and that she was honored to be in Lisbon and have the chance to speak with Gama.

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¶12. (U) This cable has not been cleared by CODEL Pelosi.

O'Neal